DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 112 280 CG 010 053

AUTHOR Kincaid, Marylou B.
TITLE Education and Life in China: Report of a Visit to the People's Republic.
PUB DATE [Mar 75]
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (31st, New York, New York, March 23-26, 1975)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Chinese Culture; *Comparative Education; *Cross Cultural Studies; *Educational Sociology; Foreign Culture; *Political Socialization; Sociocultural Patterns; Travel
IDENTIFIERS *China

ABSTRACT

This paper describes a 21-day visit to the People's Republic of China made by the author and 20 other Americans in August, 1973. The overall focus is on the role of the individual in the development of contemporary China and the attempts to integrate individual and collective goals. The process of socialization in China is examined through a description of the society's major institutions, the role of women, the concepts of work and career, and the integration of theory and practice in education. The political consciousness-raising processes in the society are examined along with recent trends in physical and mental health care, urbanization and industrialization, and marriage and family planning. (Author)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED112280

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Education and Life in China: Report of a Visit to the People's Republic

Marylou Butler Kincaid
University of Pennsylvania

In August, 1973 I had the privilege of visiting the People's Republic of China with twenty other Americans, including one who was fluent in Chinese. The 21-day tour was sponsored by the New York Guardian and the group members included students, workers, and professionals. We flew from San Francisco to Hong Kong and from there took a 2-hour train ride to the border of the People's Republic. At the border, we disembarked from the train on one side of a railroad bridge where we went through British customs and walked across the bridge to be greeted by members of the People's Liberation Army who collected and inspected our passports. Each member of our group was fully equipped with camera and film and there were no restrictions on picture-taking except inside airports.

Throughout the trip we were accompanied by 2 interpreters and hosted by local guides in each city. In Peking, our local guides included 2 students who were studying English at Peking University and doing a brief field placement with us. We taught them some excellent English to take back to their comrades at the university.

In every city we had modest but comfortable hotel rooms which had a 1930's flavor. Nowhere were we given keys and we discovered that the Chinese people are scrupulously honest and that it was impossible to even dispose of trash as it would regularly be returned in a brown envelope just as we arrived

CE 010 053

at the next city. At our hotel in Darien, a city located on the Yellow Sea, we were given rooms with mosquito netting. There we learned of China's Away All Pests campaign designed to eradicate flies, mosquitoes, rats, and bedbugs during the 1950's. Each citizen was asked to swat ten flies a day and kill the other pests when sighted to help control the spread of disease.

Throughout our visit, our Chinese friends were gracious and generous hosts. Each meal consisted of at least 8 different dishes, including fish, meat, and fresh vegetables. As we prepared to leave each city, we were guests at an enormous banquet where some fifteen different dishes were served. Dessert at each meal consisted of 1 or 2 kinds of hot soup. In each city, a crowd gathered at the railroad station to greet us on our arrival. In Kirin, a city in China's industrialized northeast where no Americans had been since 1949, people lined the streets outside our hotel during our entire stay. They watched curiously but courteously as we walked among them, chattering in English and snapping cameras.

Life in China is relaxed and informal and the people are proud of their accomplishments in the twenty-five years since the Revolution. At each school, factory, or hospital that we visited, we were first greeted outside the entrance by the members of the revolutionary committee. They are equivalent to our boards of directors or managerial staffs and are elected by the workers. In addition to their administrative tasks, revolutionary committee members engage in manual labor for a portion of time each week.

After the initial greeting we were invited to a sitting room and served tea and cigarettes and a hot washcloth. We were introduced to the particular institution we were visiting and invited to ask questions. We learned that smoking in China is almost universal among people over 35 and the Chinese claim they have not found the same connection that Americans have between smoking and lung cancer. This may be a result, in part, of the lower levels of atmospheric pollution in China's cities and in the countryside. At each institution, we presented gifts to our Chinese hosts. The most popular were copies of National Geographic and picture postcards which were hung on bulletin boards for workers and students to see.

Kwangchow, formerly known as Canton, was the first major city we visited in China. We toured the Martyrs' Garden containing a symbolic tomo honoring peasants who died in an uprising in 1927 and a Sino-Korean pavilion, built to honor Koreans who lent support to the uprising. At the Sino-Soviet pavilion we had our first discussion of Sino-Soviet relations. We learned, first, that the Chinese make a distinction between governments and people and consider the people of other nations to be friends even when there are ideological differences between those nations' governments and China. The Chinese are critical of the Soviet emphasis on the development of the bureaucratic state and their de-emphasis of mass participation in the society and consider them dangerous because they "wave the red flag to defeat the red flag." Soviet-style social imperialism is therefore considered more dangerous than

American imperialism which the Chinese view as explicit and visible to all.

We left the Martyrs' Garden and walked along the Pearl River in Kwangchow where fishing boats return to shore each evening with the day's catch. The Chinese are making attempts to clean up pollution in the river and have relocated all those people who used to live on the river in sampans.

Time is measured in China in 2 periods: before and after liberation. When the Communists took control of the country in 1949, they made sweeping changes in urban and rural life. Signs of the changes are: 1) the bicycle - an industrialized mode of transportation - was made available to every citizen; 2) paved streets were introduced in the cities; 3) resettlement blocks were built to re-house the boat people; and 4) a massive tree-planting campaign was begun. As of 1949, China faced a severe lumber shortage resulting from years of fire, war, and lumbering. Since 1949, some twenty billion trees have been planted, supplying lumber, fruit, and aesthetic beauty to the cities. In Peking, the tree planting has lowered the summer temperature by 3 degrees and greatly reduced the dust in the city.

China has been faced with the enormous task of re-housing 800 million people in twenty-five years. We saw many different varieties of old and new housing in China's urban areas and building materials lining the streets were evidence of continuous construction. Much of the housing in Peking has a European flavor and consists of walled compounds surrounding beautiful gardens. This style of housing helps to keep out the noise of

the city and fosters a spirit of community among residents who share a common courtyard. Newer apartment complexes are built in close proximity to factories, enabling workers to either walk or bicycle to work. Inside each apartment, the bedroom is situated close to the kitchen with pipes carrying heat from the stove to the area under the bed. A radio, fish tank, and thermos bottle are common household items. Day care is provided by the factory for working parents and families come together for meals in the cafeteria.

As an alternative to day care, grandparents often live with their children and care for their grandchildren while the parents work. The elderly are highly respected in China and speak to young people of life before 1949. We talked with many older folks who recalled hard times. Women, for example, were crippled from having had their feet bound as babies. One old man who was a serf working on a large estate, was forced to live in a chicken coop. Another woman spoke of having been sold by her parents at the age of 8 to a wealthy landowner.

We visited an old age home for retired coal miners who are either single or widowed. About 150 men live at the home where they have private rooms, free medical care, and receive 70% of their annual wage as a pension. It was clear from our day-long visit that these men are living out their old age with comfort and with a sense of honor. They are visited by busloads of school children who come to hear them "speak bitterness", comparing their lives before and after 1949.

Chinese families recall the period before 1949 with special "meals of remembrance" where bitter roots and herbs are served so that children will know of their parents' suffering and learn to appreciate the changes and safeguard the society that now exists. Some of the greatest changes are physical, with people over 35 having smaller, less sturdy frames, diseased skin and bad teeth - more than the normal signs of aging. Young people are healthy, sturdy, clear-skinned, and energetic.

During our stay, we were invited to wander alone among China's neighborhoods without our guides. We explored some poorer areas where, despite the rundown quality of the housing, electricity was supplied and the children were well-dressed, clean, and all wore shoes. We talked with members of the revolutionary committee of a local neighborhood. The committee is responsible for policing, local administration, and local judiciary functions. Members are elected by the people and are involved in settling family disputes and handling incidents of juvenile delinquency. Offenders are rehabilitated by being required to participate in community work. Each neighborhood has a medical clinic staffed by housewives who have received training in massage and acupuncture. They also dispense birth control pills and herbal medicines, give innoculations, and teach family planning.

Since our tour was concentrated in China's industrialized northeast, an area where few Americans had been since 1949, we visited a number of different factories. At a small pottery factory, workers also spend time caring for a vegetable garden

and participate in small study groups in which Chairman Mao's writings are read and discussed. Work at a paper-cutting factory is entirely handdone and workers are encouraged to take frequent breaks from the intensity of their labor. At an enamel factory, washbowls and spittoons are produced for use throughout China. With the widespread stress on recycling in China, a small oil factory takes waste oil to make lubricants such as hair oil. We also visited several large factories including a chemical fertilizer plant, a steel plant, and an automobile and truck factory. Our visits indicated that unsophisticated, non-technological methods still prevail in most of China's industries.

Each factory has a bulletin board containing production quotas and production figures. It demonstrates an award system that evolved out of the Cultural Revolution of the 1960's. The essence of the Cultural Revolution was a 2-line struggle between Liu Shao-ch'i and Chairman Mao. Liu Shao-ch'i urged development according to the Soviet model with a stress on heavy industry and urbanization and with profit as the goal. Chairman Mao, on the other hand, urged a de-emphasis of bureaucracy and material incentives, encouraged reliance on and development of the rural areas, and stressed the importance of people and politics over profit and economics. He stressed de-professionalization and cooperation among teams of workers along a policy of "from each according to his ability, to each according to work performed", taking need into account.

Women in China are visible on all levels of the society. They work in factories and on communes but are not well

represented on revolutionary committees. Despite Chairman Mao's directive that "whatever men can do, women can do also" and his philosophy that "women hold up half of heaven", the belief still prevails in China that there are biologically-based differences between men and women that make women more suited for child care functions than men. Day care centers are staffed primarily by women but administered by men.

Despite certain inequities, women in China have come a long way since the days of foot and breast-binding. In conversations with members of the Women's Federation, a mass umbrella organization comparable to NOW in the U.S., we learned that the Marriage Law of 1950 outlawed arranged marriages and today women keep their own names after marriage, wear no wedding rings, and dress in unprovocative comfort. By 1970, 90% of China's women were working though they still tend to predominate in industries like textiles and men in heavy industry. Women are encouraged to have only 2 children and are guaranteed a 56-day maternity leave. Abortion and sterilization are available on demand and day care facilities exist for the children of working women.

The activities of a group of young women electrical workers symbolize the changing role of women in China. Eager to challenge the notion that men are more suited for physical labor, these women are trained to do maintenance on high tension wires so that factories or mines do not have to cease operation. They bicycle out to a section of the wire, attach an explosive device, bicycle back, and set off the explosive.

Convinced that their work is an important consciousness-raising activity in the society, the women staunchly resist social pressure from their elders to seek training in more "appropriate" labor.

Housewives factories are another symbol of the contributions that women make to Chinese society. They were started during the period of the Great Leap Forward under Mao's directive that women should seek to overcome the 4 sources of oppression - the state, gods, the clan, and their husbands. Groups of women borrowed tools, collected discarded bricks from other factories, and began their work on small pieces of open land. They sought technical help from larger factories and from their husbands. The average wage earned by the women at a housewives factory where powdered steel is pressed into small machine parts is only half that of workers elsewhere. The women did not seem angry or discouraged by this fact, however, but were pleased to be using their hands to serve their country and to be involved in socialist construction.

At the nurseries and child care centers that we visited we were greeted by many colorfully-dressed children shouting "hello auntie" and "hello uncle". The children's bright, colorful clothing was contrary to our expectations though adults usually dressed in uniform-style clothing of dark colors. Actually, it has been a traditional custom in China to wear plain styles and dark colors so that no one would compete with the royalty in color or fashion. Several groups of preschoolers performed dances for us about work on the commune. This early

emphasis on the dignity of manual labor reflects Mao's attempts to reduce the distinctions between mental and manual labor and between urban and rural life that pervaded Chinese philosophy before the revolution.

Children in China attend 5 years of primary and 3 years of middle school education. Much emphasis is placed on good physical health and all schools have strong physical exercise programs. Favorite sports are basketball, swimming, and ping pong. Curriculum in the elementary school includes politics, Chinese language, physical culture, math, and revolutionary art and culture. At grade 5, English and common knowledge are added to the curriculum. Common knowledge includes mechanics, agricultural studies, and natural science. The theory and methodology taught are applied in school workshops and gardens. At the middle school level, children take 8 or 9 of 12 available courses including politics, Chinese language and literature, math, English, physics, chemistry, agriculture, health, history, geography, athletics and military training, and cultural performing. The curriculum is designed to produce a graduate who has not lost touch with ordinary working people or with the pressing problems of the nation and who has skills which can immediately be utilized to solve problems in factories and on farms.

Classroom education in China places more stress on politics than does education in America. The study of Mao Tse-tung thought and of Marxism-Leninism has an important place in the Chinese curriculum. Instructional methods would not be considered very progressive by American standards in that they are based

on memorization and group recitation. Children who fall behind are aided by their peers and teachers in after-school tutoring sessions. Special schools exist in several of China's cities for the training of culturally talented youngsters.

Self-reliance and puritanism in China are prominent values that are familiar to many Americans. First, there is the stress on physical fitness that leads to such activities as the acrobatics performed by many children's troops. Performers are encouraged to develop skill rather than daring and are discouraged from taking unnecessary risks. Most wear safety belts around their waists which are attached to wires in case of fall.

Another aspect of China's puritanism is the absence of sexual permissiveness. Late marriages are encouraged and young people are advised to select a partner based on common political objectives. Pre-marital sex does not exist, we were told, and when we asked our guides about homosexuality, they did not know what the word meant. Couples are encouraged to practice birth control and have only 2 children. This policy has been adhered to more successfully in the cities than in the countryside where people continue to have large families, especially until a male child is produced.

During our visit to an elementary school, we watched boys and girls, ages 8 to 13, demonstrate their skill in using loaded semi-automatic rifles to blast away balloons at the far end of the schoolyard. Militia training for school-age children is one facet of Mao's concept of people's war in which everyone is taught how to use weapons like toothbrushes although there

is no private ownership of them. Mao stresses reliance on an armed citizenry capable of self-defense rather than the development of highly technological weaponry.

Another aspect of people's war has been the massive building of an underground tunnel system throughout China. We visited a portion of the Sun Yat Sen tunnel network in the city of Darien. After descending to the basement of a hotel, our guide kicked a section of the floor which opened and we descended 40 feet underground for a walking tour through the tunnel. The idea of tunnel warfare was conceived during World War II as a method of resistance to the Japanese. Construction of a tunnel system was begun in 1965 in response to the Soviet build-up of troops along China's border when the Chinese began to fear a Soviet invasion, especially in Manchuria. Mao conceived of the tunnel system as a defensive rather than an offensive weapon and directed the people to "dig tunnels deep, store grain everywhere, and never seek hegemony". The tunnels underneath China's cities are equipped to sustain life for about a month and usually include a medical clinic, classrooms, a barbershop, a post office, and an auditorium. Their purpose is to carry people to the countryside where there is a larger tunnel system equipped to sustain life for a much longer period of time. The tunnel system is capable of providing safety in the event of natural disaster and in the face of nuclear, chemical, and bacteriological warfare. At the conclusion of the tour, we exited from the tunnel into the basement of a hospital, ascending to ground level in an Otis elevator.

Most students graduating from middle school express a desire to join the People's Liberation Army as their first choice. It is a highly disciplined, worker-peasant army that is fully integrated into Chinese society. PLA members study at the university or work on communes and in factories. They are usually unarmed except in border areas and there exists no formal ranking system. The popularity of the PLA dates back to the revolutionary period when members of the Red Army assisted peasants in the countryside with harvesting and health care. Presently, a PLA medical team of acupuncture experts runs a school in Shenyang for deaf and mute children. Army teams also serve as shock troops in emergencies such as floods and epidemics, repair or extend irrigation canals, and lecture to school children.

We talked with several PLA members who were students at Tsinghua University, a polytechnic institute which was the center of much unrest during the Cultural Revolution (1966-70). Many of the faculty at Tsinghua University received their training in the U.S. at such places as Harvard and MIT. They described for us the re-education process they underwent during the Cultural Revolution. No classes were held but faculty and students engaged in vigorous debates about the purposes of higher education. Chairman Mao advocated the development of methods of enlightenment rather than the traditional "stuffed duck" method which led to a concern for individual achievement through grades and long periods of study. Mao's approach was to 1) institute a new admissions policy requiring students to have 2 years of work experience before entering the university, 2) emphasize

learning by doing which required faculty and students to leave the classroom to study and solve actual problems in the society, and 3) advocate shared responsibility for administration among educators, students, soldiers, and workers. Mao advocated an open book method of examination and asserted that students need not be encyclopedias but should think for themselves and raise criticisms, opinions, and suggestions openly. After working for 2 years in a factory or commune, an individual is recommended for study at the university by other commune members or factory workers. Criteria for recommendation include one's level of activism in political study, an ability to integrate theory and practice, and maintenance of close ties with ordinary workers and peasants.

Despite Mao's directive to abolish the national entrance examination, it is still used in some provinces and is the source of much controversy. During our stay in China, a young man who had gone to work in the countryside following middle school wrote a letter to the People's Daily which was published on the front page. He criticized the fact that he was being required to take an entrance examination since he had forgotten much "book knowledge" during his 2-year stint on a commune.

During a visit to Kirin University, the students put on a cultural performance for us and then expected us to reciprocate. Prepared for this expectation in advance, we sang a brief repetoire of songs, accompanied by a member of our group who had brought along his cello.

The Chinese have their own way of dealing with Watergaters

such as Liu Shao-ch'i and other revolutionary bureaucrats who become divorced from production and from the masses. In response to Mao's directive of May 7, 1968, officials high and low are encouraged to attend a May 7th Cadre School where they study and work the land in order to relate to the peasants and reduce the gulf between mental and manual labor. Thus, at any May 7th School one might find a mayor feeding pigs or a university professor pi[illegible]g cucumbers. While at the school, bureaucrats continue to receive their regular salaries, enabling their families to maintain themselves as usual. In the Chinese spirit of criticism/self-criticism, one member of our group questioned the fairness of such a policy and suggested that perhaps these bureaucrats should receive a salary based on their level of production. After a few moments, our Chinese comrades responded, simply, "But, it's never been done that way before."

Art in China has an international and revolutionary flavor. Billboards containing excerpts from Chairman Mao's writings or posters of China's pantheon - Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin - are located at the sites of communes and factories and in the center of major cities. Stalin is still included because he is considered to have made important contributions to socialist theory. Blackboards containing production figures, poetry and art created by the workers, and local news are also located at the sites of communes and factories.

Traditional forms of art and culture have been revived and spread throughout the country. Young people learn ballet and folk dancing, opera and folk songs, and the techniques of putting

on a stage performance. The new emphasis is on visual arts such as cinematic and theatrical productions and new cultural works such as operas with revolutionary themes. The content of art is political and is designed to teach lessons, morals, and political maxims and to express the world view of the working classes.

Newspapers are posted in prominent places for all to read. During our trip we had access to all but provincial newspapers and had no trouble keeping up with events back home in the U.S. News reports were brief but accurate. Posters of Chairman Mao are hung on public buildings but are no more numerous than photos of former president Nixon or President Ford. Mao buttons are no longer being worn by people in China, owing to attempts to de-emphasize the cult of Mao. One family we visited had constructed a shrine consisting of a bust of Mao placed inside a fish tank and adorned with handmade flowers. Despite attempts to cool the cult, many families have a photo of Mao hung in their homes and everywhere we sensed that people hold their leader in genuinely high regard.

The locomotive is the primary mode of long-distance travel in China. We took several overnight train rides and found them clean and comfortable. Bus transportation is common in the cities since there are no privately-owned cars. Cars are owned by the state or by a commune or factory and are used for emergency travel and for transporting foreign visitors. The bicycle is the main mode of transportation for individual citizens in China and comes in all sizes and shapes which are

put to use in numerous ways. With so many bicycles on the road, 5 P.M. bicycle jams are inevitable. Horsedrawn carts are still in wide use in the rural areas and are used to bring produce into the cities.

We visited a resevoir which symbolizes the impact of the principle of self-reliance that pervades Chinese society. It was completely hand-dug by some 30 thousand people over a period of 2 years. Its existence has served to end flooding and provide irrigation for a more stable agricultural system. While visiting the resevoir, we took a boat ride to some vineyards where we were treated to fresh green grapes, a commodity most of us had not eaten for several years, owing to our sympathies with the Farm Workers' struggle. At the resevoir, workers also cultivate artificial pearls by taking the membrane of 1 oyster and placing it inside another. Our friends at the resevoir generously gave us each a pearl and several tubs of grapes and fresh fish.

Our visit to the city of Shenyang was a particularly memorable one. Our hotel looked out onto a central plaza surrounded by several large buildings. Located in the center was a large Mao monument, 1 of 2 that we saw during our stay in China. Wherever we went, huge crowds followed. When 2 women in our group went shopping in a local department store, it became so jammed with curious onlookers that the police had to clear out the store so the women could make their purchases. At no time in Shenyang or elsewhere were we afraid to walk alone, day or night, and we were never physically shoved or harmed by the curious crowds. We took along a frisbee and spent one

afternoon playing in the central square. This phenomenon brought several thousand Chinese together to watch and, though timid at first, we soon were able to involve them in the activity. Our leave-taking from Shenyang was also memorable. As we gathered on the steps of our hotel waiting for the bus, a crowd of several thousand Chinese gathered in the square cheering and clapping for us. We returned their warmth and hospitality by singing a round of "I've Been Working On the Railroad" which brought thunderous applause from the crowd.

As a contrast to urbanization and industrialization, we visited several people's communes while in China. By way of introduction to China's geography, it is important to note that China is just slightly larger than the U.S. It is 3.7 million square miles as opposed to our 3.6 million square miles. However, only 11% of the land is now under cultivation and most of China is either too high or too dry for agriculture. Therefore, just about every square inch of land that can be worked has something growing on it. Added to the land shortage is the fact that the available land has been farmed for thousands of years. This also means that about 95% of China's 800 million people live on 46% of the land area in eastern China. This is analogous to the situation we would face if there were 760 million Americans living east of the Mississippi.

By 1971, agricultural communes covered 95% of the cultivable land. All of it is collective property except for 5-7% still held in garden plots privately owned by the peasants. No more than 5% is in nationalized or state farm enterprises. The

production team is the smallest unit, consisting of about 30 families. Team leadership is responsible for the daily planning of farming and for distribution of profits. The production brigade contains several teams and organizes land for special use such as tree planting. It may also provide facilities for grinding and storage of grain and for transportation. The commune includes 10-30 production brigades and is concerned with overall planning and supervision of small factories, education, and health services. Electricity is carried to the communes although there is a fairly low level of mechanization by U.S. standards.

Commune families own their homes and have no rent to pay. An average gross income per household may range from $80 to as much as $700 per year. Most families breed a private pig on their family-owned plot which adds from $10 to $60 a year to the household income. Wages or shares in the collective income are decided by an honor system in which an individual estimates the value of his or her work and the estimate is then accepted, reduced, or raised in judgments made by the work team. Portions of the collective income go for state taxes (3-8%), operating expenses (40%), and a public fund for investment in equipment, welfare and loans, medical insurance and old-age care. From 15-20% of grain is earmarked for quotas delivered to the state at fixed prices. Commune families have a savings account that earns .7% interest. Household items usually include a bicycle, a clock, and a sewing machine. Many communes now breed their own fish and part of the catch is distributed to member families. Vegetables are either homegrown or so cheap as to

be minor budget items.

Most communes have a general store with almost as many items as are available in the cities, a commune clinic staffed by barefoot doctors where acupuncture treatment is available as well as birth control pills, herbal medicines and innoculations, and a commune school. Most also have a tool-making shop and peasants are gaining confidence in their mechanical ability and in the use of labor-saving devices. China is now self-sufficient in grain and future growth will emphasize cash crops for export to finance rural industrialization and mechanization.

During a visit to one commune, we pleaded with our guides for the opportunity to spend time working with the peasants in the fields. They arranged for us to pick cucumbers but we were embarrassed to find that we lasted only 1/2 hour on the job and had trouble finding the cucumbers on the vine.

During the trip we visited a hospital in Darien to observe 4 operations utilizing acupuncture as the method of anesthesia. Dressed in surgical outfits, we wandered in and out of 4 operating rooms observing 2 thyroid, a lung, and an operation to remove a stone in a man's urinary tract. Needles were inserted in his hands and feet and were twirled electronically. Oblivious to the process, each patient was fully awake and talked with us during the surgery. Operating rooms were clean informal places and the surgery proceeded with no fanfare. Patients were fed canned pears during the operation to moisten their throats. One woman got up off the operating table after her

thyroid operation to greet us and express her hope that we were all feeling well. Regrettably, several members of our group grew faint and had to be taken from the operating rooms. My own experience with an acupuncture treatment for a stomach ache attests to the curative value of the needles. Four inches long, needles were inserted in my stomach and legs by a barefoot doctor and twirled for several minutes. They were then removed, drawing no blood. After a short nap, I had fully recovered.

The essence of medical care in China is the stress on prevention, on the training of paraprofessionals, and on the use of traditional and western methods of treatment. Barefoot and Red Guard doctors are recruited from the masses to receive 3 to 6 months of formal training. They go then to the countryside or staff urban neighborhood clinics.

Although we were unable to visit a psychiatric facility while in China, accounts of visits made by others indicate that mental illness is seen as an external enemy. Patients are urged to fight it by becoming involved in production and political activity within the hospital. At the Shanghai Psychiatric Institute, for example, there is no binding, isolation, or restriction of patients. Treatment methods include the use of anti-psychotic drugs, acupuncture, and group discussion sessions where patients engage in supportive criticism/self-criticism. A patient's job is held open during the period of hospitalization and his or her employer and family are consulted by the hospital staff before the patient's release to educate them about mental illness and the need for follow-up care. The stress is on

returning the patient to the community and to productive labor as quickly as possible.

Another aspect of medical care in China is the use of herbal medicines. At a deer farm which we visited, ginseng is raised and used to stimulate the metabolism of aging people. Attempts are being made to raise the potency level of the cultivated ginseng up to the level of wild ginseng. One member of our group likened ginseng to "Asian speed." Deer at the farm are tamed and their antlers are removed and used for medicinal purposes.

Our trip to China would have been incomplete without a visit to the Ming Tombs and the Great Wall, located on the outskirts of Peking. The Ming Tombs were built in the 12th century as a burial place for emperors, their families, and their possessions. Monuments such as the Ming Tombs have not been destroyed by the Chinese government but, instead, have been restored for view by all. They are seen as part of China's cultural heritage as well as a sign of labor by the common people. A truly magnificent sight, the Great Wall is one thousand years old and winds through mountains for a total length of 3 thousand miles. Built by the people for defensive purposes, a portion has been restored for foreign visitors and local citizens. The Wall is wide enough to hold 6 horses abreast and is quite steep in some sections. Local citizens visit the Wall on their day off and picnic at its base. According to the astronauts, the Great Wall is clearly visible from outer space.

During our last days in Peking, we visited the Forbidden City or old imperial palace which was off-limits to local citizens during pre-liberation days. It has been restored as a monument to the people who built it and not to the emperors who inhabited it. We also toured the Peking zoo where we, rather than the pandas, were the main attraction.

We gathered, on our final evening, at the Peking Duck Restaurant for a farewell dinner with our guides. We listened to a farewell poem composed for us by one of our guides. After dinner, we watched the whole city go up in lights and people emerge from their homes by the thousands. China's 10th Party Congress had just completed its 4-day meeting and its conclusion was celebrated by massive parades of people throughout the night and next day. On this historic note, we boarded our Japan Air Lines jumbo jet and flew home.